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SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR NEA/ELA, AF/SPG

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [EG](#) [SU](#)
SUBJECT: ARAB MINISTERIAL BACKS SUDAN VS. ICC

REF: A. CAIRO 1528
[1](#)B. CAIRO 1483

Classified by Minister Counselor for Economic and Political
Affairs William R. Stewart for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

[1](#)1. (SBU) The Arab League called International Criminal Court (ICC) Chief Prosecutor Ocampo's request for an arrest warrant against Sudanese President Bashir "unbalanced" in a statement after its July 19 ministerial on the subject, but stopped short of calling on the UN to use its power to stay the court for 12 months. The statement emphasized respecting the sovereignty of Sudan, called on the Sudanese judiciary to "continue trials and achieve justice," and asked the UN Security Council not to do anything that "obstructs" efforts toward a political settlement or "threatens" peace-keeping in Darfur or South Sudan. It called for a high-level international conference to move the peace process in Darfur, and charged Arab League Secretary General Amre Moussa to engage with the Sudanese government during his visit on July [1](#)20. The Arab League also formed a committee consisting of Yemen, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, and Egypt to follow-up the issue, according to press.

[1](#)2. (C) Arab League Secretariat Advisor for African Affairs Zeid Sabban told us after the meeting that the member states had uniformly pressed for a tougher statement against the ICC, and claimed that Secretary General Amre Moussa and the secretariat staff had walked them back to a more "balanced" position. Nevertheless, Sabban said that the Arabs were in agreement that "justice" in Sudan should come through an as-yet unspecified process, not the ICC. He said that the international community should be concerned with achieving progress on political reconciliation and peace in Darfur first, and justice second, and that Moussa would seek to re-invigorate the Sudanese government on the peace process during his July 20 trip to Sudan. Press also reported, but Sabban did not confirm, that Moussa would push for Bashir to somehow try Ahmed Haroun and Ali Kushayb, who the ICC already indicted.

[1](#)3. (C) Separately after the meeting, Egyptian MFA Spokesman Hossam Zaki confirmed Sabban's reporting and noted that the Arab League's resolution has no specified time-frame and focuses on the principles of political process, stability, security, and justice rather than specific measures. The Arab League supports Egypt's continuing call for an international conference on Darfur, he said.
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